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Home Page

Breaking News:

SPEC to Develop Energy Metrics for Servers

The non-profit Standard Performance Evaluation Corp. (SPEC) has formed a new committee to develop standard methods and metrics for comparing energy use of server-class computers.

"Balancing performance with power consumption has emerged as a major issue for datacenter managers, computer manufacturers, government, and the industry at large," says Larry Gray, chair of the newly formed SPEC Power-Performance Committee. "SPEC is particularly well-positioned to tackle this challenging task, given the organization's experience and expertise in system performance measures and the breadth of our existing benchmarks."

Current SPEC member companies committed to developing a new power-performance measurement standard include AMD, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, IBM, and Sun Microsystems. Bruce Nordman of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Energy Analysis Department is a supporting member of the committee and liaison to the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program.

Key representatives participating in the new SPEC committee have been participants in industry and government activities dealing with computer energy consumption. This ensures cooperation between SPEC and organizations around the world that are working on these initiatives. SPEC is also getting direct input from organizations such as the EPA's Energy Star Program.

"A server power-performance benchmark from SPEC will have a positive impact on computer systems manufacturers and customers worldwide," says Andrew Fanara, an Energy Star team leader for the EPA. "It's a good first step in enabling manufacturers to better compete based on power consumption and helping IT managers design datacenters with energy efficiency in mind."

SPEC is interested in hearing from IT managers and other potential users of power-performance comparison information to ensure that the committee understands customer needs and can develop the best possible benchmarking solutions. Companies or experts in power measurement are also welcome to provide input on measurement device specifications and methods for measuring power to the server.

The initial product from the SPEC Power-Performance Committee will address small- to medium-sized computer server platforms. Actual methods and metrics have not been defined, though SPEC will use its current benchmarks -- considered worldwide standards -- as the basis for generating loads typical of day-to-day server use.

The first SPEC energy and performance benchmark is scheduled for release in the first quarter of

2007. SPEC expects that a wide range of computer server manufacturers, systems integrators, and resellers will run the benchmark and report results. Data from running the benchmark tests is targeted for use by IT professionals who manage datacenters, industry analysts, energy researchers, government organizations, and members of the technology media.

More information on the SPEC Power-Performance committee is available at www.spec.org/specpower or by e-mailing specpower@spec.org.

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Top of Page